

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 461 454

RC 022 014

AUTHOR Kay, Jon, Ed.; Beasley, Holly, Ed.; Hollingsworth, Teresa, Ed.; Smith, KC, Ed.

TITLE Rural Folklife Days: Resources for Teachers.

INSTITUTION Florida Dept. of State, Tallahassee. Div. of Historical Resources.

PUB DATE 1998-10-00

NOTE 22p.; Contains photographs that may not reproduce well.

PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)

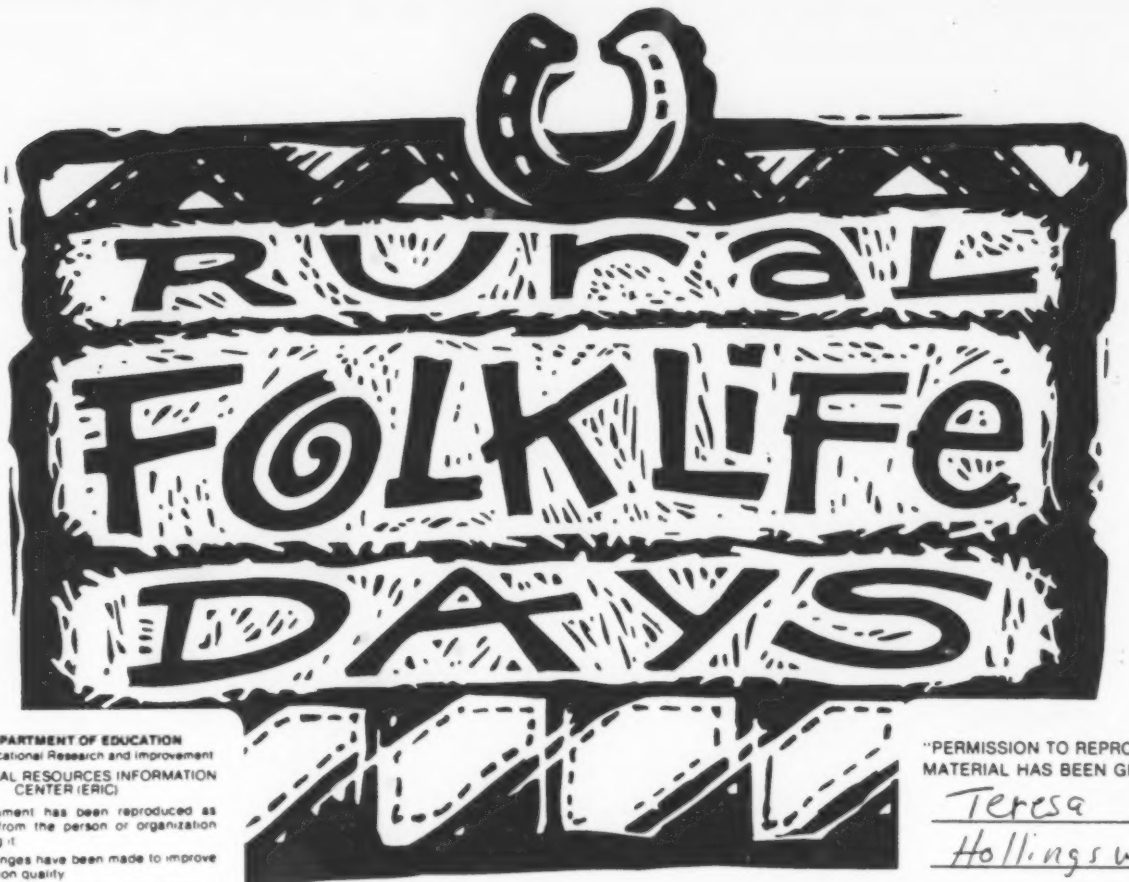
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Maintenance; Elementary Education; *Folk Culture; *Learning Activities; Lifelong Learning; *Local History; Regional Characteristics; Resource Materials; *Rural Areas; Story Telling; Teaching Guides

IDENTIFIERS *Florida (North)

ABSTRACT

Rural Folklife Days is an annual celebration of customs and crafts that have been practiced every fall by generations of people in rural areas of north Florida. This packet is designed to help teachers prepare elementary students for Rural Folklife Days and to introduce them to traditional crafts and arts that are still practiced in parts of north Florida. Brief descriptions of folk traditions include the following topics: fishing, farming, blacksmithing, cow whips, lye soap making, quilting, mule teams, foods, sugar cane grinding and syrup making, canning, peanut brittle Making, and storytelling. Seven activities are presented that help students learn the concepts of folklife, how they are used everyday, and how they apply to areas such as environmental studies, mathematics, language and visual arts, social studies, and science. Each activity includes materials needed, objectives, subjects, and procedures. Also included are a storytelling evaluation guide and a folk artist interview guide for student use, and a form for teachers to use to evaluate the festival and the activity guide. (TD)



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Teresa
Hollingsworth

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS



**FLORIDA HERITAGE
EDUCATION PROGRAM**
DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE



This education packet was prepared for the 1998 Rural Folklife Days by the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State

Contributing editors:

Jon Kay, Florida Department of Environmental

Protection, Stephen Foster State Folk Culture Center

Holly Beasley and Teresa Hollingsworth, Florida Department of State,
Bureau of Historic Preservation

KC Smith, Florida Department of State, Bureau of Historical Museums

Special Thanks to Mandy Kay who assisted in the development of this Teacher Resource Guide.

For information about Florida Heritage Programs, contact the Division of Historical Resources 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250; (850) 487-2333 <http://www.dos.state.fl.us/dhr>

October 1998

Contents

Welcome to Rural Folklife Days.....	1
Integrating Rural Folklife Days into the Classroom	2
What is Folklife?.....	2
Celebrating Florida's Folk Traditions	3
Activity Ideas for Class or Home.....	7
Tall Tales from Florida.....	11
Sharing Florida Stories.....	12
Storytelling Guide.....	14
Interview Guide.....	15
Site Map.....	16
Teacher Evaluation.....	17

I WELCOME TO RURAL FOLKLIFE DAYS

In many households, when you run out of butter, or soap, or some other item, you hop in the car, dash to the store, and then dash home again to use a product that someone else has manufactured. In our modern commercial society, we are accustomed to relying on others to produce the food, household items, tools, and even the amusements that we need and enjoy.

Of course, life wasn't always this easy. In earlier times, families had to plant field and gardens, raise livestock, weave cloth and make clothes, pickle and preserve foods, fabricate tools and household supplies, build their own houses, and come up with games and pastimes that allowed family members to share each other's company and while away the time not taken up by chores. With so much to be done, everyone had to pitch in, even the youngsters. As soon as children were able—often by age four or five, they had their own special tasks and were learning complicated skills. The spring and the autumn were especially busy times, for people planted during the early months and harvested and made ready for winter during the fall.

In this environment of self-reliance, it was natural that customs, crafts, recipes, and rituals would become traditions within a family—learned informally by observation and imitation and handed down from generation to generation. Today in Florida and elsewhere in the nation, some people continue to practice these longtime ways of life. They produce and make many of the items that they need for daily existence, comfort, and enjoyment, and they depend very little on malls and grocery stores. It's not that they don't want to be "modern"; and, certainly, they should not be thought of as "backward." Rather, there are many reasons why people choose to perpetuate traditional customs in the midst of our fast-paced, convenience-laden world. Sometimes, it's more economical because they own land on which they can raise plants and animals to feed themselves. Sometimes, it's easier because they don't have a car, or they are elderly, or they live a long way from town. But sometimes, it's because they really value and want to carry on those activities that their grandparents and parents taught them.

That's what Rural Folklife Days are all about—getting to know and experience customs and crafts that have been practiced every fall by generations of people in rural areas of north Florida. To share the harvest and prepare for the coming winter, many farm families still grind sugar cane to make syrup, boil lye and fat for soap, can fruits and vegetables from home gardens, and make quilts by hand. Leisure time often is filled with storytelling, music, and games. Rural Folklife Days celebrate these traditional activities by encouraging young people to think about seasonal rituals and family traditions that are part of their own household.

Celebrating Traditions of the Fall

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Integrating Rural Folklife Days into the Classroom

This Teacher's Guide integrates the materials found at Rural Folklife Days into a variety of educational subjects. While RFD is related to state and local history, it has potential for a much broader application. The suggested activities in this guide touch on environmental studies, mathematics, language arts, visual arts, social studies, science, etc.

This guide is intended to be a companion for the festival. Use the lessons before the event to maximize your students experience at RFD, or use it after the festival as a follow-up to reinforce what they experienced and learned.

What is Folklife?

As a means of exploring the many aspects of folklife which exist in Florida, we must first study the definitions and concepts for understanding the discipline. Folklife, like other fields of study has its own terminology. Once these basic concepts are mastered, there are endless possibilities for the study of traditional culture.

To many people the term "folklife" or "folklore" means the "quaint" activities of rural people, activities such as playing a fiddle tune, making a quilt, planting "by the signs," and curing illness with home remedies. Others view folklife as the cultural expressions of ethnic groups. Rural people and members of ethnic groups do possess many traditions that often have been passed through many generations, but they are not the only groups that maintain traditions. Folklife is, in fact, a constant and meaningful part of daily life which, because of its familiarity, most people take for granted.

Folklife: Knowledge that is passed on informally from (not by taking a class or learning from a book) generation to generation (or from person to person), either by word of mouth or through imitation. Used interchangeably with folklore.

Folk group: Two or more people who share the same skills or traditional knowledge.

Tradition: Knowledge, customs, practices and beliefs that are passed on from one person to another.

Celebrating Florida's Folk Traditions

Rural Folklife Days offers a variety of demonstrations and hands-on experiences for students to enjoy on the grounds of the Stephen Foster State Folk Culture Center (see enclosed map). Below are brief overviews to the traditions celebrated at this year's festival, with a few classroom ideas.

Fishing

Whether done with a fancy rod and reel or a homemade cane pole, fishing is one of the most popular pastimes in Florida. Because of the state's long coastline and abundance of bays, lakes, rivers, and ponds, this activity employs thousands of residents and also provides a relaxing form of recreation as well as food for the dinner table or campfire. As part of their interest in fishing, avid anglers have developed a variety of homemade lures from hand-carved wooden plugs to poured plastic worms. Knowing the type of lure to use with different fish and how to cast a line with precision are part of the folk art associated with sport fishing in the state.

Farming

In many respects, farming is the epitome of rural life and a cornerstone in the study of folk traditions. Historically, the observation and recording of folkways were associated primarily with people who worked the land. In modern times, agriculture remains an essential element in understanding longtime customs and crafts because so many of these traditions rely on human interaction with nature and the products that a local environment provides.

Blacksmithing

A blacksmith can make and repair a great variety of metal products, from farm tools and kitchen utensils to decorative items and horseshoes. To fashion an item, the smith begins by heating a piece of iron in a coal-fired forge. When the iron is hot enough to be pliable, the smith holds it on an anvil with a pair of tongs and bends, cuts, welds, and hammers the metal into a desired shape. The process requires considerable skill and patience. An experienced rural blacksmith is both a craftsman and an artist. Blacksmiths generally learn the trade by working as an apprentice with a master. There are still many blacksmiths in north Florida who repair tools and fix wagons; however, much of their work today consists of making ornamental ironwork and specialty items.

Cow whips

The cow whip, used to drive cattle, is an important tool for Florida cowboys. It consists of strands of buckskin, rawhide, or nylon braided into a long, tapering cord that is tied to a wooden handle. Usually the core of the body of the whip is weighted with shot to make it hefty and stiff. Buckskin was one of the favorite materials used for whips, but nylon has become the preferred material among most cattle ranchers because it is more weather resistant and lasts longer.



Lye soap making

Generations ago, rural families made lye soap in the fall when there was an ample supply of pork fat from slaughtering hogs, another traditional fall activity on farms. Since few north Florida farmers raise hogs today, people who still make their own soap save fat scraps from the kitchen for their soap pots, and they may make soap at any time of year. They melt the animal fat in a large iron kettle over an open fire, then add water and lye, stir the mixture until it boils, and remove it from the heat. As the mixture cools, it is poured into pans or boxes. When it solidifies, the soap is cut into bars. People use lye soap for bathing and washing dishes, floors, and clothing. As a paste, it is said to be an effective remedy that stops itching from insect bites. Some people say chunks of lye soap even make good bait for catfish traps. By making soap, rural people convert otherwise wasted resources into a valuable product.

Quilting



Quilting is a folk art that provides warm, decorative bed covers. Many Florida women make quilts using techniques and patterns that they learned from their mothers, grandmothers, and friends. Quilting traditions in north Florida reflect both African American and Anglo American styles. African American quilters favor strip or string quilts. Anglo American quilters prefer patterns that use a repeating square such as "The Drunkard's Path" or "True Love Knot." Quilters use fabrics from a variety of sources: old clothing, leftover dress-making cloth, and material bought specifically for quilts. The quilt top consists of a colorful variety of fabric pieces stitched together into patterns. The actual quilting is the final stage of joining the three layers—the top, a middle layer of cotton or polyfiber batting (filler), and a bottom fabric. The three layers are stretched on a wooden quilting frame and stitched together with intricate patterns.

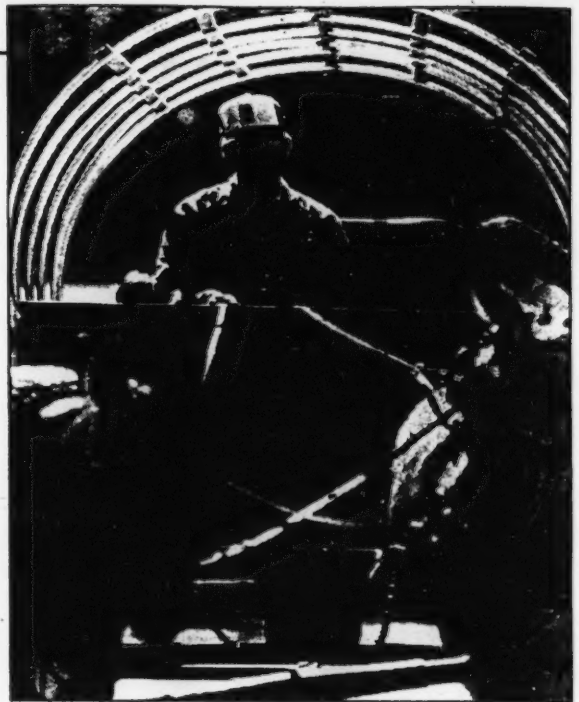
"In the fall or winter when there was less farm work to do, we'd go to a different home each week to sit around the quilting frame and sew. Everybody took a covered dish. Young women came to learn the skills from older quilters. In late afternoon when the work was done, the women would wrap the finished quilt around one of the young girls and tell her she was the next to be married."

From Out of the Pocket: My life on the Florida/Georgia Border, 1998 by Nancy Morgan.

Mule-drawn wagons

Until the 1940s, farming in Florida depended on draft animals for power. Many older farmers grew up with horses, mules, or oxen on their farms; and when they were young, they learned to hitch and drive a team. Before tractors became popular, teams of mules commonly were used to haul loads and to plow. Many farmers consider mules to be more dependable than horses and prefer them over other draft animals. Mules can begin to

be trained at age two. With a few hours of work each day, a new mule becomes accustomed to the harness and within a month will be able to pull a sled alongside another more experienced mule. Continued practice refines their coordination as a team. Some people in north Florida continue to drive a two-mule team to haul hay or firewood on the farm or for recreational "hayrides."



North Florida Foodways

Over the past two hundred years, certain foods have become associated with North Florida. These foods, their preparation, and their consumption comprise the foodways traditional to the area.

Early pioneers to North Florida, both black and white, survived off the land. Homesteaders in North Florida established family farms that produced much of the variety of foods and livestock necessary for subsistence. Most families grew their own vegetables with summer crops of bell peppers, greens, okra, squash, cucumbers, eggplants, and watermelons, and winter vegetables including mustard greens, collards, onions, cabbage, turnips and rutabagas. Practically everyone had at least a small sugar-cane patch, and the cane-grinding season in the fall became a time for family and community socializing. Chickens were raised for eating as well as for eggs, along with turkeys, ducks and rabbits. In addition to working their farms, settlers caught fish from the rivers and lakes, hunted wild game and birds, and leaned to rely on Florida's natural resources for their families' support. Early pioneer farmers depended on scrub cattle that wandered the open prairies for beef and "piney-woods rooters" (wild hogs) for pork. The trapping and hunting of wild animals in North Florida included raccoon, 'possum, squirrel, deer, rabbit, and birds. Only a few items such as salt, pepper, sugar, flour, and spices had to be purchased.

Today the foodways found in North Florida reflect this history of self-sufficiency. African American foods, often known as "soul foods," can be compared with the "Cracker" foods of the Anglo-American community. Both diets show a resourcefulness and exhibit similarities in ingredients that are home-grown or "caught" for the table. It is sometimes difficult to tell whether a certain dish has Anglo and African American roots. For example, Hoppin' John is a speciality dish found in North Florida that is enjoyed by both the white and black communities, and is associated with good luck if eaten on New Year's Day. Hoppin' John is made with black-eyed peas, rice and hog jowl; there are as many variations to this traditional dish as there are cooks.

Cane grinding and syrup making



Sugar cane grinding and syrup making are fall traditions enjoyed by rural families in many parts of Florida. Around Thanksgiving, they harvest the cane and bring it to the grinder, or "mill." Roller grinders powered by mules, horses, oxen, or a tractor crush the stalks and squeeze the juice into a barrel. Three hours of grinding produce a 60-gallon "batch" of juice, which fills the kettle. The syrup makers pour the juice into a cast-iron kettle for boiling. It takes three to four more hours for the batch to cook down to six to eight gallons of syrup. The syrup makers must skim foam and froth from the boiling juice and, as the water evaporates, stir the syrup to keep it from scorching. Neighbors and relatives frequently gather to visit and watch the process. Toward the end of the boiling, young and old sample the sweet, sticky "pole cat" that forms at the edge of the kettle. Many north Floridians continue to grind cane for syrup, preferring to use it as a sweetener instead of maple syrup or refined sugar.

Home canning

Rural families are well known for their home-canned fruits and vegetables. In times past, these canned goods might be traded for other food, materials for clothing, or other goods. Canning is an economical way to preserve foods, but it must be done carefully to prevent spoilage from molds or bacteria. Safe canning requires pouring hot, thoroughly cooked food into sterilized glass jars and sealing them with metal lids lined with rubber gaskets. The jars are then cooked in a water-filled pressure canner or a large pot for an amount of time that varies according to the specific food. After the jars have been cooked and removed for cooling, a sharp pop signals that the lids have sealed. The hard work of canning provides family and friends with delicious jellies, preserves, and vegetables for the year to come.

Peanut Brittle

The peanut first came to America on sailing ships from Africa, where it was called a goober. Nutritious and easy to grow, the peanut is not a nut but, rather, a pea that looks like a nut. At first, it was largely ignored as a valuable food. However, after George Washington Carver devised more than 100 ways to prepare the peanut as food, this versatile plant became an important crop throughout the South. Farm families found many ways to prepare these tasty peas—from boiling them to using them in cooking. Many traditional recipes, including the easy-to-make candy called peanut brittle, remain popular today.

Storytelling

Florida has a long tradition of storytelling that has focused on a variety of narrative forms—in particular, folktales, tall tales, legends, myths, and anecdotes. From the porches of courthouses, private houses, markets, and feed stores; and in the hideaways of fishing spots, hunting camps, and campfires, yarnspinners have spawned and perpetuated their stories about 'gators and the 'Glades; about unseasonable summers and unpredictable winters; about peculiar people of every persuasion; and about every other characteristic that Florida has to offer. Storytelling has remained a popular pastime, regardless of one's age.

Activity Ideas for Class or Home

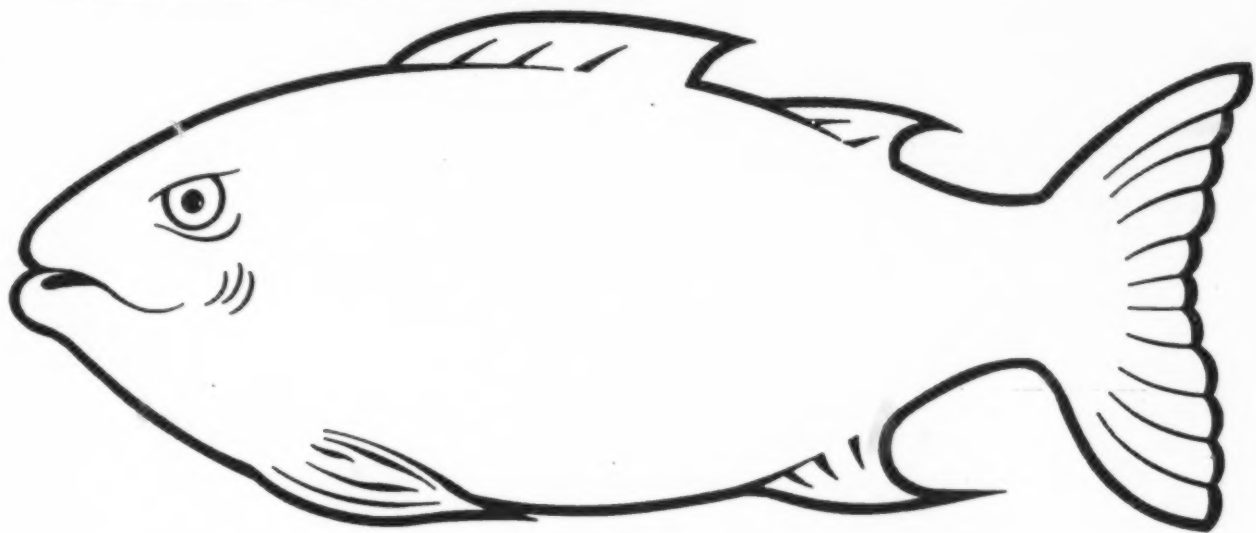
Fishing for Folklife

Objective: students will learn:

- the concept of folklife, and how we use it everyday.
- eye/hand coordination

Materials: paper, hole punch, dowel rod, string with magnet attached

Procedure: We all have traditions, and belong to various folk groups. The following activity illustrates student, family and community traditions.



Make a copy of the fish template for each of your students. Write folklife related questions on fish. Punch hole for the "eye" and attach a paperclip. Make a simple fishing pole with a dowel rod and a piece of string. At the end of the string tie a magnet. Spread the paper fish on the floor. Have students one at a time use the pole to pick up a fish by the paper clip, then they answer the question. Through the questions and answers the students should discover their own traditions. As students give their answers, have the class offer variations from their own life.

K-3 Examples: Name a game you play outside. Sing a song you learned at home. What is your favorite homemade food? What holiday do you celebrate in October and how? Do a handclap rhyme, etc.

4-6 Examples: What is something you collect? What winter holiday do you celebrate and how? Do a handclap rhyme and tell where you learned it. How do you celebrate Halloween? What is a tradition? What is your favorite food at Thanksgiving? What kind of cake do you get on your birthday? Name a game you play at recess, etc.

Workers and their Tools

Materials: none

Procedure: Most jobs have tools that are associated with them: cowboys/whips, farmers/tractors, carpenters/hammers, mailperson/mail bag, nurse/shot, doctor/stethoscope, seamstress/needle, butcher/knife, etc. Have the students create this rhythm pattern. Pat their lap with both hands, clap once, snap their fingers on their left hand, snap the fingers on their right hand; keep repeating this sequence. To the rhythm, have the students alternate naming a profession and their tool.

Closure: After the exercise, discuss with the children how having the right tools and knowing how to use them is important to doing a job. Talk about the types of jobs mentioned and how people learn to use tools.

Waste Not, Want Not

Objective: Students will learn:

- how to conserve resources
- reducing, reusing, and recycling materials

Materials: paper, pencil

Subjects: Language Arts, Environmental Education

Procedure:

1. Lead students in a discussion about how rural people often use and reuse their resources, such as fat for lye soap making, food scraps for composting, and fabric for quilting.
2. Have students keep a journal of the items they throw away in a week, such as paper and food scraps. Have them write suggestions of how they could eliminate or reuse some of their waste. How could this help the student and their family, community, and environment?

Closure: in groups, have students share their writings on using and reusing.

A Stitch in Time

Objectives: The students will:

- demonstrate knowledge of how quilts are constructed
- will design their own quilt pattern on paper

Subjects: Mathematics, Art

Materials: white paper, crayons, rulers, scissors, pencils

Procedure: The teacher will conduct a Know/Want/Learned (KWL) lesson on quilts.

What do I know about quilts?

What do I want to know about quilts?

What have I learned about quilts?

Brainstorm and chart what the students know and want to know about quilts.

If possible, invite a parent or grandparent to demonstrate/discuss quilting.

Show examples of various quilt designs and discuss the mathematical concepts involved (i.e. measurement, geometric shapes, etc.).

Show examples again in order to share the names of quilts. Have student's hypothesize why a quilt would be named, "Log Cabin" for example.

Have student's design and name their own quilt using paper and coloring utensils. Share with the class.

Background: One example of using available resources can be seen in the recycling of used clothing in the folk art of quilting. The fabrics from old clothes were once the raw material for quilts. While old clothes are still recycled to a degree, many quilters today are able to make patchwork tops from free scraps obtained from several garment factories in the region. Polyesters, cottons, and assorted blends may all be combined to create colorful quilt designs. Hand-carded cotton batting has been replaced by the more easily accessible commercial batting; however, the quilts of North Florida exhibit a continuing resourcefulness in the use of available materials.

Quilting in this region reflects both African American and Anglo-American traditions. Many black quilters favor what is called the strip or string quilt in which scraps of cloth are sewn into strips and then assembled in patterns. Although Euro-American approaches are also used by black quilters, the strip approach predominates. Anglo-American quilting reflects Euro-American origins with patterns such as Dresden Plate, Double Wedding Band, Bear Claw, and Nine Patch being favorites for patchwork tops. These patterns rely more exclusively on the use of repeating square designs than do strip quilts.

Closure: What has the student learned? The teacher may wish to highlight some of main concepts on the board or have the students write a brief paragraph.

Other Suggested Activities: Cut out three-inch fabric squares and triangles. Have students see how many geometric patterns they can make by arranging the patterns on a felt board. Talk about contrast, shape, and value.

Read a book(s) about quilts and have the students sketch their interpretation of the book or write a story from the perspective of the quilt. Share within groups, then have the group pick one to share with entire class.

Resources:

Eikmeier, Barbara J. (1997). *Kids can quilt*. The Patchwork Place: Bothell, WA.
Flournoy, Valerie (1985). *The Patchwork Quilt*. Dial Books for Young Readers, New York.
Williams, Charlotte (1992). *Florida Quilts*. University of Florida Press: Gainesville, FL.

Team Work

Objective: Students will work as a team to accomplish a goal.

Materials: String, pylons

Introduction: Before the activity, ask, "Where have you heard the term horsepower?" "What does it mean?" "Have you ever seen a horse-drawn or mule-drawn wagon?"

Procedure: Design an obstacle course outside in a grassy area. Divide into teams and then pairs. With rope, tie a bow around the first runner's legs. They are to run the course, untie legs and an adult will tie the next pair. When everyone has had the opportunity to run the course, discuss the efficiency of the teams. Problem-solve how the teamwork could be improved (i.e. changing partners, slowing down, or communicating). Run the race again and discuss if the changes helped.

Let's Make Peanut Brittle!

Materials: Recipe ingredients, thermometer

Procedure: This exercise lends itself to teaching several concepts relating to math and science. According to the developmental needs of the students, the teacher can address the relationship between liquids and solids, measurement, fractions, or boiling point. At any level the importance of order, detail, and following directions can be learned.

The Recipe:

2 cups sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
1/4 cup water
2 cups unroasted peanuts
Pat butter
1 teaspoon soda

Mix sugar, syrup, and hot water. Cook until it spins a thread when tested with a spoon. Add peanuts and cook until peanuts stop popping. Add butter, then soda, and stir. Pour on buttered cookie sheet.

Traditional recipe in Nancy Morgan's *Aunt Nancy's Country Cooking On The Banks Of The Suwannee River*, 1989.

Other Suggested Activities:

1. We all have favorite or traditional family foods. Create a classroom cookbook using recipes collected from students. Include information about the history and use of the food. Bind the books with student's individually created cover.
2. If you were telling someone how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, how would you explain it? Have students write directions and follow them. It will be an interesting lesson on giving instructions and being explicit.

Tall Tales

It got so cold here one time that it was freezing everything. Ground was cracked open and trees were snapping like rifles. But I didn't know how cold it really was 'til I started to go to bed. Then when I started to blow out the lamp, I couldn't. Found it had froze the flame on the lamp. Had to break the fire off with my fingers and throw it out in the yard.

It got so hot that it parched the peanuts in the field. Then it cooked the syrup out of the cane, and it run down the peanuts and made peanut candy.

The best dog I ever had was a coon dog. All I had to do was show that dog the board that I wanted to stretch a hide on, and he'd go out and catch a coon to fit it. A man came along one day and was going to give a 100 dollars for him. But about that time my wife came out on the porch with her ironing board; never did see that dog again.

A man planted a watermelon vine in a swamp. It grew a melon so big that he had to make a ladder 300 feet high to cut it from the stem. The watermelon burst, and there was so much water in it that they put up a water mill and ground 300 bushels of corn with the juice.

The mosquitoes were so bad one night that a man crawled under a 100-gallon sugar kettle to keep them from biting him. The mosquitoes were so big and tough that they bit right through the iron kettle. The man braided their bills on the inside of the pot. He braided so many and they were so strong that they flew off with the kettle.

Taken from: Reaver, J. Russell, ed. *Florida Folktales*. Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1987; pp. 77-80.

Sharing Florida Stories

An Activity Idea

Objectives:

Students will:

- formulate opinions and record information about stories and personal narratives.
- practice interviewing skills.

Subjects/Skills:

- language arts, folk arts
- comprehension, analysis, evaluation, interviewing

Age Level:

Grades 4–8

Materials:

- evaluation guides (pp. 10–11)
- pencils
- clipboards or writing boards

Time Required:

Allow 1 hour to prepare for this activity and 1 class period to complete it. Portions of the activity are continued at Rural Folklife Days.

Background:

Florida has a lively tradition of storytelling that has focused on a variety of narrative forms, including folktales, tall tales, legends, myths, and anecdotes. Collectors of tales such as Zora Neale Hurston, Marjorie Rawlings, Stetson Kennedy, and Russell Reaver have ensured that these oral traditions are available for everyone to enjoy.

But what makes a good story? Certainly, the narrator's ability to hold one's attention with words, gestures, movements, and feelings is important. Likewise, the composition of the story is critical—whether it contains believable characters, events, and emotional suspense that keep listeners interested in the outcome. Many factors, from mood to mystique, help to define a good story and good storyteller.

This activity provides two evaluation guides for use at Rural Folklife Days. One encourages students to think and comment about the storytelling that they hear. The other enables them to interact directly with tradition bearers and craft demonstrators, who will relate personal narratives about how they became interested in their activity and acquired the knowledge to carry it forward.

Preparation:

1. Make copies of the evaluation guides and determine how they will be used at Rural Folklife Days. Depending on the number of students, teachers might :
 - a. assign each student one question to ask and record on a form;
 - b. establish teams of students to work together to complete a form; or
 - c. have the class work together, asking and recording answers on a form
2. Gather clipboards, or prepare pieces of mat board with paper clips at the top, for students to use when writing on their forms.

Procedure:

1. Lead students in a discussion about the elements of a good story, such as the enthusiasm of the teller, character development, and events in the tale.
2. Explain that, at Rural Folklife Days, students will observe demonstrations of traditional skills and crafts by people who will tell personal stories about how they acquired their interest.
3. Distribute copies of the two evaluation guides. Discuss the questions on each sheet and explain how the questions will be asked at the festival (i.e., individually, in teams, as a group).
4. Allow students to practice interviewing a partner using the Interview Guide. Partners can describe some activity that they know (playing an instrument, food preparation, family holiday traditions) to represent a craft or skill, although the folk arts that they will see at Rural Folklife Days will be quite different.

Storytelling Evaluation Guide

Storyteller's name: _____

Title or subject of the story: _____

About the Story:

1. Who or what was the main character? _____

2. How would you describe the main character (appearance and behavior)? _____

3. What did he/she/it do in the story? _____

4. Why did he/she/it act that way? _____

5. Describe other characters in the story. _____

6. Were the characters believable? _____

About the Storyteller:

7. How did the storyteller make you interested in the story? _____

8. How did the storyteller act out the story? _____

9. Explain why you liked or didn't like the way the story was told. _____

10. What suggestions would you give to the storyteller? _____

Interview Guide

Questions for the Folk Artist

Name: _____

City of residence: _____

Place of birth: _____ Date of birth: _____

Type of folk art: _____

How old were you when you learned to do this? _____

Who taught you to do it? _____

How long did it take you to learn? _____

Who else in your family or community does this, and how long have they done it? _____

Questions about the Folk Art

How is this folk art done? _____

What special tools, materials, or instruments do you use? _____

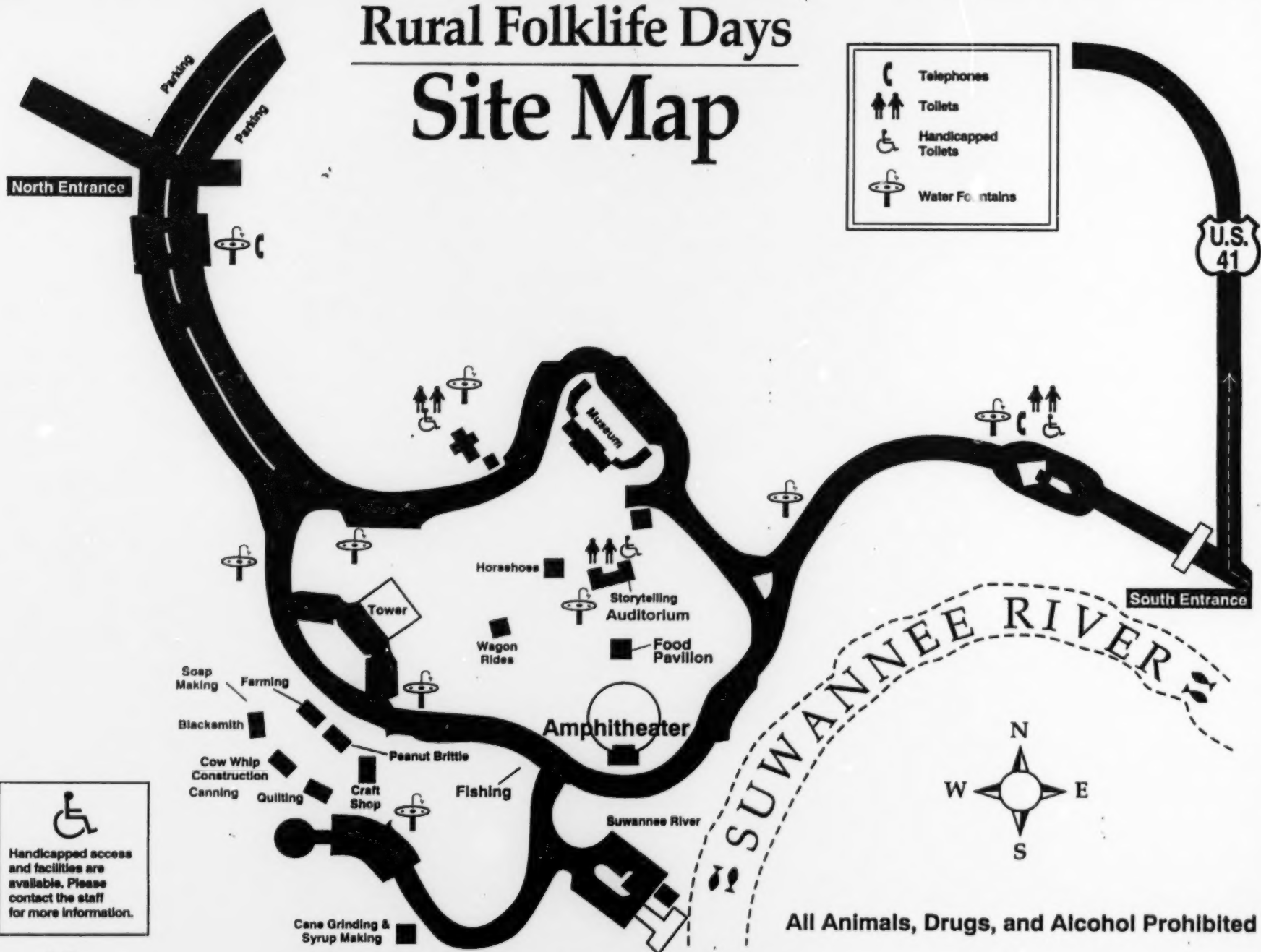
Why is this tradition important? _____

Something for You to Do

Use the reverse side of this paper to:

1. write a paragraph about the story that you heard from the artist.
2. draw pictures of the folk objects or performances that you saw.

Rural Folklife Days Site Map



Teacher Evaluation

1. Please rate the items listed below according to following criteria:

1 = very useful; 2 = somewhat useful; 3 = not useful; 4 = no opinion;
5 = did not use Teacher Evaluation

This packet is designed to help teachers prepare students for Rural Folklife Days and to introduce them to traditional crafts and arts that are still practiced in parts of north Florida. If you use these materials, we would like to know whether they have been effective. To help us to improve the resources that we prepare in the future, we ask you to complete this evaluation after your experience at the event.

	1	2	3	4	5
Welcome to Rural Folklife Days (RFD)	—	—	—	—	—
Integrating RFD into the Classroom	—	—	—	—	—
What is Folklife?	—	—	—	—	—
Celebrating Florida's Folk Traditions	—	—	—	—	—

Activity Ideas for Class or Home:

Fishing for Folklife	—	—	—	—	—
Workers and their Tools	—	—	—	—	—
Waste Not, Want Not	—	—	—	—	—
A Stitch in Time	—	—	—	—	—
Team Work	—	—	—	—	—
Let's Make Peanut Brittle	—	—	—	—	—
Sharing Florida Stories	—	—	—	—	—

2. Was this your first class visit to Rural Folklife Days? Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Would you repeat the experience? Yes ☐ No ☐
4. Would you recommend it to other teachers? Yes ☐ No ☐
5. What suggestions would you offer for improving the materials in this packet? _____

6. How can the materials more effectively complement curriculum strategies? _____

7. How do administrators in your school/district feel about your using Rural Folklife Days as a teaching tool?

8. Did you attend the teacher in-service that was offered in association with Rural Folklife Days, and if so, what were your reactions to it?

9. Would you like to add any other comments or suggestions?

Thank you for your comments. Please return this form to:

Holly Beasley,
Bureau of Historic Preservation
500 S. Bronough St.,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250
(850) 487-2333, 1-800-847-7278,
hbeasley@mail.dos.state.fl.us
Fax #: (850) 922-0496